FRONT PAGE DISASTERS INTERVIEWS CHARLES BERLITZ AUTHOR, THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE & WITHOUT A TRACE

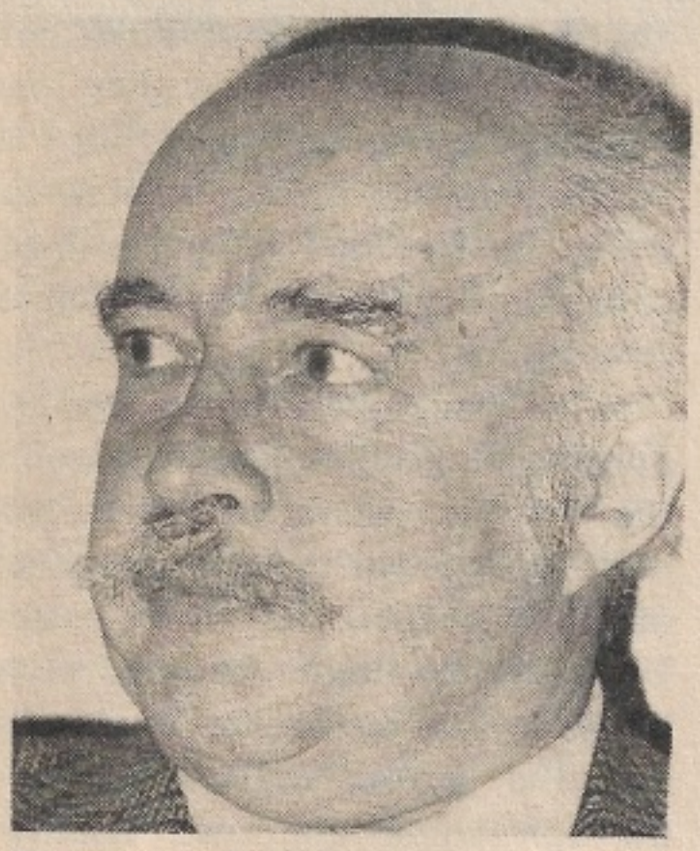

Photo by Irving Sealey/Global Communications

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *Why would you say there is such an intense fascination with the subject of the Bermuda Triangle?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: There are several reasons. One is the great interest in the possibility of visitors from outer space or inner space, and the theory that the disappearances in the Bermuda Triangle are the result of, shall we say, space-nappings by alien intelligences. Second of all, is that many, many people in the past have had experiences within the Triangle, and have told their friends about what happened, but have been unwilling to talk to the press or radio up until now. Quite a few pilots and shipmasters have come forward recently, who have previously been unwilling to talk about their experiences, and for one reason or another are now willing to speak openly. Thirdly, this area of mystery is so near the U.S., and so incomprehensible, that it fascinates people.

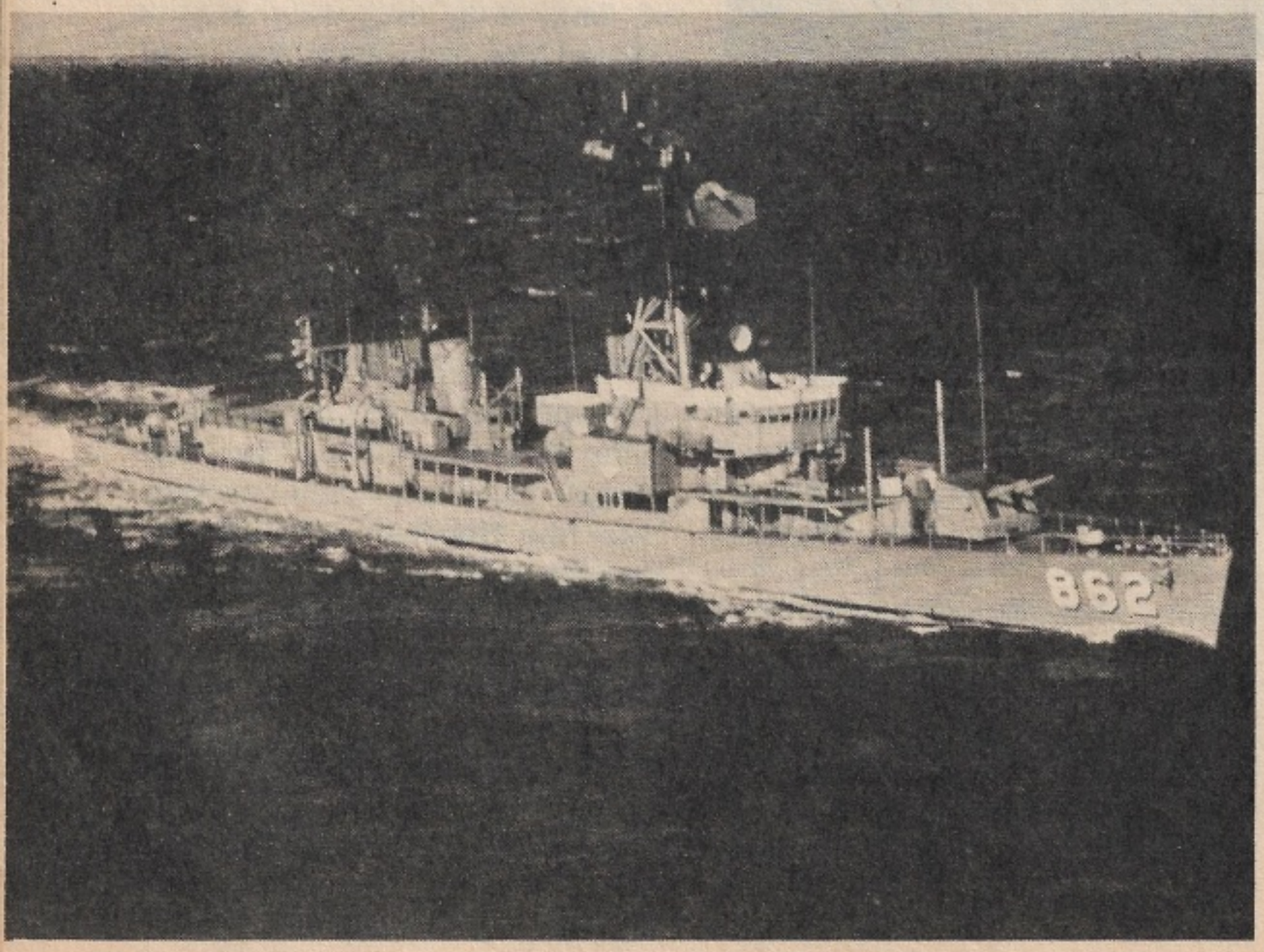

Photo Courtesy U.S. Navy

According to author Charles Berlitz, the destroyer USS Vogelgesang *was nearly torn apart by mysterious strains and stresses while on a return cruise from Puerto Rico to the United States.*

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *Do you personally believe UFOs might in some way be involved in the many disappearances which have taken place there?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: I can't rule out the possibility. My own investigations have touched more on what I call USOs, rather than UFOs. That is, Unidentified Submarine Objects. Again and again we find people who have seen unidentified craft going down into the water and then occasionally surfacing. This has been noted not only at night, when all that can be seen is a ring of fire going, down into the water, but during daylight hours as well. There is one enormous section off the Bahama Banks where the water is relatively shallow, and from the air torpedo or cigar-shaped objects have been observed time after time traveling in excess of 150 knots per hour. On several occasions we have had perfectly reputable ship captains claim they've seen these USOs come at them very fast, and then veer away from their ship at the last minute, dive under them and continue on their way after emerging on the other side.

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *How does one account for the ships which have made it through the Triangle but have reported mysterious electrical interference which seems to throw off their compasses and even knock out their radios?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: Whether this has to do with sun spots or intensification of magnetic fields, we just don't know. Whatever these fields are, they seem to change, sometimes they are active in one section, sometimes in another. How do we know, in fact, that they're magnetic fields? Well, we know because many planes experience difficulty with their gyros and compasses, and many times their instruments malfunction also. In addition, there is some sort of a drain on the equipment. Among the survivors we find that all the electricity goes off, like we've heard on land when there are UFOs in the vicinity. Boats working on diesel are often able to pull out and make it safely back to land.

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *Besides the disappearance of Flight 19 and the* Cyclops, *which vanished without a trace, what other stories have intrigued you the most?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: There are so many that it's hard to choose. A year after Flight 19 vanished, the *City Bell,* a schooner was found abandoned and adrift, some 300 miles southeast of Miami. Even more bizarre is the fact that 75 years to the day, the *Marie Celeste* was discovered with no one on board, although food was still hot in the ship's galley, indicating that the crew and passengers had abandoned ship only recently, although there were no signs of a struggle or mutiny attempt. As a general rule, I should calculate that a boat or a yacht disappears every week, and two planes a month. Even more interesting, perhaps, is the case of the *Ellen Austin.* The law is, if you find a derelict and can

haul it in, it's yours. In 1881 the *Ellen Austin* was found adrift and they examined it, and everything was in order except that there was no sign of life anywhere to be seen. The boarding party put a "new prize" crew aboard, with the intention of hauling it into port and claiming it as their own. During the night a fog settled on both ships, and in the morning when the *Ellen Austin* was reboarded, the new crew had disappeared! A second prize crew was sent to keep watch, the second night, and as the dawn rose the next morning, not only was this crew gone like the one before it, but the ship had also vanished. The mooring hoses had been severed, and there was no evidence at all that the *Ellen Austin* had ever existed!

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *Is the United States government aware of the situation?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: The Navy doesn't take official cognizance of it, but they have issued a directive to have training flights on the other side of Florida, because too many planes and ships were being lost in the Triangle. Private airline companies say it doesn't exist, but they fly around it when possible. Generally, commercial pilots appreciate the danger the most. They know that something is amiss in the area, since their instruments have a habit of not functioning they try to fly around it. There are many strange things which have happened over the course of years. There was one National flight that came into Miami Airport, and as it was being tracked on radar, it disappeared for 10 minutes. The ground crew went berserk thinking the plane had crashed. But then it came back on radar. They were sort of kidding the pilot when he landed, saying, "Is it true you were out of this world for 10 minutes?" The pilot said, "What do you mean?" and when they told him that he'd disappeared from radar for 10 minutes, the pilot looked at his watch, and then the co-pilot looked at his watch and both were 10 minutes slow. The chronometer on board the National jet was also 10 minutes slow, and every single person on the airplane had lost 10 minutes on his or her watch! So there is some twisting of time that happens, in addition to a lot of other peculiar things.

FRONT PAGE DISASTERS: *Is it possible to associate disappearances within the Triangle with the cases in which people vanish on land? Is there a time warp involved, and if so, can we enter and leave it?*

CHARLES BERLITZ: I don't think we can do it voluntarily. The late Ivan T. Sanderson, world famous zoologist, was very interested in this possibility. He noted that people vanished and appeared again, all the time, without knowing who they were. They couldn't speak, and were found wandering around in different parts of the world. Not only do ships, planes and people disappear, but also automobiles. Ivan was interested in it as a two-way street. As far as I'm concerned, the Triangle seems to be a one-way street. ■

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